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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3884
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE 0826
RUCNCLS/SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0225
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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: HEALTH MINISTER SACKED AFTER PRESIDENT'S
CRITICISM

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (SBU) On November 19, Anatoliy Dervonoy was replaced by Zhaksylyk Doskaliyev as Kazakhstan's Health Minister. Rumors of Dervonoy's dismissal had circulated for several months, but reached their peak after President Nazarbayev's sharp criticism of the state of the health industry on November 7. At a conference on health-care issues, Nazarbayev publicly called the work of the Ministry "unsatisfactory" and said that "poor management" was to blame for the industry's wide-spread corruption and faulty resource management. Nazarbayev criticized the Ministry for fostering a system where doctors take bribes and sell medicine that is supposed to be free, use state funding irrationally, and do nothing to prevent maternal and child morbidity. He berated the health-care professionals for "tripling the health budget in the last four years" and failing to shift towards a Western-style system of preventive and primary care. While the President's criticisms may be well-founded, many health sector specialists believe the ultimate reason for Dervonoy's dismissal was the delay in the construction of 100 hospitals that were supposed to be built as part of Nazarbayev's "100 Schools, 100 Hospitals" plan for social improvement. (COMMENT: Whatever the truth, at least Nazarbayev said the right things. END COMMENT.)

13. (SBU) Minister Doskaliyev is not a stranger to the health sector -- he served as Minister of Health from 2001 to 2004. Doskaliyev is a medical doctor by training with a specialization in surgery. He served as Rector of the Aktobe Medical Academy 1998-2000 and was subsequently appointed Chairman of the Health Agency under the Ministry of Health, Education and Culture. He became Minister of Health in 2001, when the Health Agency became a separate Ministry. Upon leaving the Ministry, Doskaliyev was appointed Rector of the Kazakh State Medical Academy in Astana, and in September 2007, he was elected to the Mazhelis, where he served until his recent appointment.

HOAGLAND